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TAGS: PREL KPAL UNSC IS
SUBJECT: ARAB GROUP DRAFT UNSCR ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

REF: USUN NEW YORK 547

Classified By: IO PDAS James Warlick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) This is an Action Request. Department endorses USUN reftel request for authorization to engage the Arab Group, and also to engage UNSC members, in response to a Saudi initiative to seek a UNSCR focused on Israeli settlements.

¶2. (C) Mission should pursue the following strategy:

-- First attempt, particularly with like-minded Council members, to permanently forestall any Council action on the grounds that it would likely be disruptive to ongoing bilateral negotiations in the region. See para ¶3.

-- If unsuccessful, enter into a negotiation with the express intention of slowing down and eventually stopping progress on the resolution. (Note: The June 24 Quartet statement, rather than the statement from its May 2 session, should be the basis for elements for potential addition to the Arab Group text) See para 4.

-- If the text does not die in the negotiation process, Mission should request further guidance from the Department, but may note to relevant interlocutors that an unacceptable text may leave the U.S. no choice but veto, an outcome that will advance the interests of radical forces in the region rather than those of the GOI and PA, and the chance for peace.

¶3. (SBU) Mission may draw on the following points in discussing with like-minded Security Council members a long-term delay of consideration of the AG settlement resolution:

-- Bilateral talks between the PA and Israel covering core issues, plus multi-lateral efforts, are actively underway. There is already ample scope for the parties to address the issue of Israeli settlement activity.

-- The Quartet noted its continuing concern over settlement activity in its June 24 statement, however only in the context of the Roadmap requirements of both parties, not singling out one party or one issue. The Council should not supersede the institutions it has established to shepherd peace process negotiations.

¶4. (SBU) In the event Mission is unable to prevent discussion of the Arab Group draft, Mission may draw from the following elements to draw out a negotiation. Note: these elements key off the June 24 Quartet statement and not the May 2 statement (reftel):

-- Express strong support for ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (per June 24 Quartet statement).

-- Call on both sides to fulfill Roadmap obligations and refrain from steps that undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations (per June 24 Quartet statement).

-- Welcome the progressive transfer of security responsibilities from Israel to the PA in certain areas of the West Bank, as PA security forces develop capacity (per June 24 Quartet statement and Roadmap).

-- Express deep concern at continuing settlement activity and call for a freeze on all settlement activity and the dismantling of outposts erected since March 2001 (per Roadmap and June 24 Quartet statement).

-- Condemn rocket, mortar, suicide, and other attacks targeting civilians. Call for a permanent end to these attacks and the dismantlement of the terrorist infrastructure (per Roadmap and June 24 Quartet statement).

-- Note with dismay the June 24 rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza directed against civilians in southern Israel. Reference positively FM Fayyad's condemnation of the attacks. Note Hamas' responsibility for all such attacks, including those from other terrorist groups operating in Gaza.

-- Welcome Israel's removal of several significant West Bank checkpoints, the opening of a number of Palestinian police stations in Area B, and PA security force deployment to Jenin (in coordination with Israel) to uphold law and order and crack down on terrorism. (per June 24 Quartet statement)

-- Call on all (regional) states to cut off public and private funding and all other forms of support for groups supporting and engaging in violence and terror (per Roadmap but substituting "regional" for "Arab" to encompass Iran).

-- Underscore concern about humanitarian conditions in Gaza (and southern Israel) and welcome Egyptian efforts to restore calm in a manner that would provide security to all Gazans (and Israelis), ensure the controlled and sustained opening of the Gaza crossings for humanitarian reasons and commercial flows, support the legitimate PA government, and work towards conditions that would permit implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (per Quartet June 24).

15. (U) Septel provides points for discussion on the Arab Group draft in the context of our overall presentation during the June 26 consultations on the Middle East.

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